

## Strategic Democracy Building: How U.S. States Can Help

The war on terrorism provides an unprecedented opportunity for the United States and its supporters to influence—and ultimately to help reform—countries that harbor terrorists or seek to develop or obtain weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and to influence them in ways that more closely align with vital U.S. national interests. Republicans and Democrats alike need to get beyond the current debate over nation building—a term so politically loaded that it is now virtually useless except as a partisan wedge—and move forward together to promote a carefully targeted and sustained policy of strategic democratization.

The United States cannot unilaterally impose democracy on other countries, nor can it dictate the types of governmental institutions that other people choose to adopt—if they are able to choose at all. Political reform must come from within. Encouraging such fundamental reforms in other nations will certainly not come quickly or easily. In some cases, positive change may not happen at all, at least not in this lifetime. Strategic democracy building aims to reinforce the development of democratic institutions in strategically important nations—helping their own reformers to help themselves and their people—and seeks to cultivate new U.S. allies and coalition partners.

Although the context after September 11 may be new, such a strategic approach has already proven successful through programs such as the State Part-

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nership Program (SPP). This program, which now spans three U.S. presidential administrations, began a decade ago under President George H. W. Bush as a joint experiment by the Departments of State and Defense to accelerate the integration of former Eastern bloc nations into NATO. The SPP has since evolved beyond NATO and now includes 34 nations in Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Central Asia, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. The SPP pairs the senior military and political leaders of these nations with senior officers in the U.S. National Guard, state governors, and other high-ranking political officials from 34 states, 2 U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. Thanks to the SPP, most state governments are helping Washington add to the list of potential allies and coalition partners with which the U.S. government can collaborate politically and militarily in the future. The result is a bipartisan success story that can serve both as a foundation and as a model for other strategic democracy-building initiatives.

### **The State Partnership Program**

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The SPP's quiet achievements during the past decade have gone largely unnoticed by many foreign policy specialists in Washington. Perhaps the leading study of the states' involvement in U.S. foreign policy devotes just one sentence to the SPP.<sup>1</sup> The changing nature of the program may explain this oversight at least partially. What was initially conceived primarily as a way to help reform the armed forces of former Eastern bloc nations—and incidentally as a way to strengthen the effectiveness of state National Guard organizations through professional contacts and exchanges—steadily expanded to a more comprehensive set of military and political relationships between states and their partner nations.

As the early 1990s unfolded in Central and Eastern Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted NATO to contemplate eastward enlargement into several former Warsaw Pact members that were already well on the road to becoming peaceful and stable democracies. Yet, the escalating violence in the Balkans, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, throughout the decade also demonstrated that the democratic transformation of Eastern Europe was by no means automatic or preordained. The drive toward NATO enlargement, and more generally the attempt to accelerate the democratization of Central and Eastern Europe, prompted the United States to consider practical democracy-building measures, prior to extending offers of NATO membership, to encourage grassroots political and military reform throughout the former Eastern bloc.

In mid-1992, the Bush administration and NATO officials specifically began exploring ways to support the development of a civilian-controlled military in

the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to coincide with the scheduled withdrawal of Russian troops from the area. These discussions inevitably touched on NATO's anticipated enlargement eastward, thereby broadening the context of the discussion into political as well as military issues.

In December of that year, Bush's National Security Council—joined by the U.S. secretaries of state and defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff—formally endorsed a plan that relied heavily on the U.S. National Guard to assist military and civilian authorities in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in their steps toward military and political reform. This plan featured a series of military-to-military exchanges and visits as well as joint military-civilian “traveling contact team” missions by NATO experts. Significantly, the plan specified that the National Guard's mission would be both military and political, in keeping with the possibility that the Baltic nations might eventually become candidates for NATO membership.

In the months that followed, these military and civilian teams met extensively with their Baltic counterparts to provide training, resources, and other support in a wide variety of areas, such as enforcing basic human rights guarantees, creating a military legal code based on the rights of soldiers, establishing a professional noncommissioned officer corps and a chaplain corps, and developing other governmental institutions designed to ensure the military's political neutrality and loyalty to a lawful constitution. Over time, the missions of these traveling contact teams incorporated increasingly specialized expertise in areas such as information technology systems, logistics support, legislative and public affairs, personnel management, and organizational development.

The National Guard proved to be an inspired fit for this kind of assignment because it is a dual federal-state reserve military force, reporting either to the president (for national defense missions) and to the state or territorial governors (in cases of civil disturbances or responses to natural disasters and emergencies), depending on the situation. The National Guard pledged to provide a reliable pool of professional citizen-soldiers who could lend their skills and a relatively modest portion of their unit's resources to the effort. At the same time, these men and women could serve as models for the basic behaviors that NATO was expecting its new alliance members from the Baltic nations to emulate.

The National Guard's involvement offered at least two other advantages. The first was to facilitate the political participation of governors, who by law

**Republicans and Democrats alike need to get beyond the debate over nation building.**

appoint the adjutant generals who command the state National Guard units, as well as other state officials. This process could help develop a broader bipartisan constituency for the program instead of relying solely on the U.S. Congress. A second benefit was cost. The federal government was already footing nearly the entire bill for state National Guard operations. It could now leverage those resources to assist the Baltic nations without the need for substantial new congressional appropriations and with few, if any, direct costs to the participating states.

The Defense Department's European Command (EUCOM) and the National Guard Bureau (NGB) established the SPP in March 1993 by pairing the top military and civilian leaders in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with state National Guard units in Maryland, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, respectively. In selecting these particular states as the first SPP participants, the NGB noted the strong ethnic and cultural ties between their own immigrant populations and those of the partner countries. Although not required, many subsequent partnerships have continued this practice of teaming individual states with nations that, through past immigration patterns, have a historical affinity with their SPP partners in the United States.

From an early emphasis on military-to-military exchanges and similar contacts in the Baltic states, the SPP steadily expanded to include other former Eastern bloc nations, as prioritized by the Pentagon and the State Department. At the same time, by 1995 the SPP's scope had grown to include what military officials called "multifaceted engagement activities ... in the social, economic and military spheres."<sup>2</sup> These programs now include both military and civilian exchanges; traveling contact and "familiarization" visits; and training and other forms of assistance focused on emergency management, disaster relief operations, civil and criminal justice, judicial processes, and law enforcement. Under the rubric of democratization, officials from EUCOM and the NGB and SPP state participants also engage in a range of programs and activities aimed at preparing partner nations to satisfy NATO's membership eligibility criteria, including:

- commitment to peace and security measures consistent with North Atlantic Treaty obligations;
- adherence to democratic governance, including transparent governmental decisionmaking and legal processes, and the rule of law;
- respect for territorial integrity and state sovereignty;
- protection of fundamental human rights and rights of ethnic minorities; and
- evidence of economic development, including the transition to a market-based economy and the privatization of selected state-owned industries.<sup>3</sup>

Besides sponsoring official SPP-initiated activities aimed at helping partner countries to meet the criteria for NATO membership, the NGB encourages the ongoing development of informal relationships designed to reinforce these goals. Col. Max Brewer, a senior NGB adviser to the program, views a corresponding benefit of SPP military-to-military contacts as “the relationships between governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations within the partners. Through the SPP, many countries have established successful governmental, business, educational, and medical relationships with counterpart agencies from the partner state.”<sup>4</sup>

From its inception, EUCOM has quietly but firmly touted that U.S. strategic national interests are served through SPP by enhancing NATO’s military capabilities and by reinforcing peace and democracy in the region. In a recent report, for instance, the commander in chief of U.S. forces in Europe, Gen. Joseph Ralston, describes the SPP as “a significant section of the United States European Command’s overall theater engagement strategy.”<sup>5</sup> After recalling the SPP’s help in bringing Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic into NATO in 1999, Ralston predicts the program “will continue to be an integral part of our strategy to foster stability and democracy in Eastern Europe. ... We also look forward to assisting our other partner countries to achieve free-market economies and civilian-controlled military establishments responsive to the needs of their citizens.”<sup>6</sup>

More recently, the SPP has expanded beyond Europe and its NATO roots. Since the second half of Bill Clinton’s administration and continuing under President George W. Bush, the SPP is no longer limited to preparing prospective NATO candidates for membership in that alliance. Instead, the SPP has grown to include state partnerships in three other U.S. military command areas: Central Command (CENTCOM) in Central Asia, Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in Latin America, and Pacific Command (PACOM) in Southeastern Asia and the Pacific Rim. Yet, despite the geographical enlargement of the program (see table 1) each of these partnerships—now covering a total of 36 nations—is still modeled on the program’s original goals of enhancing the military capabilities and democratic institutions in partner countries. In the latter case, the SPP has adapted its baseline criteria for achieving NATO membership to provide a more general set of requirements and milestones to facilitate the emergence of new U.S. allies and coalition supporters.

**SPP partnerships have aided the collection and sharing of intelligence on Al Qaeda.**

According to a fact sheet developed by the NGB, the optimum SPP partnership has the following characteristics:

- The host nation demonstrates genuine interest in the partnership.
- U.S. theater security cooperation and host nation objectives are satisfied.
- The force protection risk is low.
- A minimum of additional resources is required to execute exchanges.
- National Guard core engagement competencies are heavily incorporated.

With these criteria in mind, the Defense and State Departments are currently considering a range of other nations for possible inclusion in the SPP, including Bosnia-Herzegovina; former Soviet republics Azerbaijan and Armenia; and African nations Morocco, South Africa, Niger, Mali, and Benin.<sup>7</sup> Depending on how the secretaries of defense and state assess U.S. strategic priorities in the coming years, the military's needs could ultimately outpace the number of state National Guard units that can participate in the program. Notably, however, the SPP was never intended to become a permanent relationship between the participating states and their partners but rather was designed to help nations achieve their own specific national goals, such as gaining entry into NATO. Once these goals are met, SPP state partners are free to undertake new relationships with different nations.

The SPP guidelines also recognize that partnerships work best when both sides have a mutually reinforcing interest in success. By its own terms, the SPP envisions an ongoing collaboration between both sides to achieve a common set of goals, such as successfully completing the process for NATO accession. As the program moves beyond its original role to include nations that are not seeking to join NATO or any other U.S.-led military alliance, the partners' expectations of realistic milestones and definitions of success are also changing. Because the promise of NATO membership and its resulting benefits will not serve as an incentive in such cases, a given partner's acceptance and participation in the SPP should be linked to some other set of tangible goals, such as receiving specified U.S. financial assistance and recognition.

To help ensure that each relationship does, in fact, end as programmatic milestones and goals are met, SPP architects have articulated a three-stage life cycle for the program. During the initial phase, which focuses almost entirely on military matters, a three-year SPP plan is developed with input from the partner nation, the partner state, and various Defense Department officials. The next stage, the sustainment phase, is a period of intensive military-related activities with expanded U.S. resource support. SPP officials refer to the sustainment phase as "the active growth and

**Table I.**  
**State Partnership Program Participants (as of July 2002)**

Country	U.S. State Partner	U.S. Military Command
Albania	New Jersey	EUCOM
Azerbaijan	Oklahoma	EUCOM
Belarus	Utah	EUCOM
Belize	Louisiana	SOUTHCOM
Bolivia	Mississippi	SOUTHCOM
Bulgaria	Tennessee	EUCOM
Croatia	Minnesota	EUCOM
Czech Republic	Texas, Nebraska	EUCOM
Ecuador	Kentucky	SOUTHCOM
El Salvador	New Hampshire	SOUTHCOM
Estonia	Maryland	EUCOM
Guatemala	Arkansas	SOUTHCOM
Georgia	Georgia	EUCOM
Honduras	Puerto Rico	SOUTHCOM
Hungary	Ohio	EUCOM
Jamaica	District of Columbia	SOUTHCOM
Kazakhstan	Arizona	CENTCOM
Kyrgyzstan	Montana	CENTCOM
Latvia	Michigan	EUCOM
Lithuania	Pennsylvania	EUCOM
Macedonia (FYR)	Vermont	EUCOM
Moldova	North Carolina	EUCOM
Panama	Missouri	SOUTHCOM
Paraguay	Massachusetts	SOUTHCOM
Peru	West Virginia	SOUTHCOM
Philippines	Hawaii, Guam	PACOM
Poland	Illinois	EUCOM
Romania	Alabama	EUCOM
Slovakia	Indiana	EUCOM
Slovenia	Colorado	EUCOM
Turkmenistan	Nevada	CENTCOM
Thailand	Washington	PACOM
Ukraine	California	EUCOM
Uruguay	Connecticut	SOUTHCOM
Uzbekistan	Louisiana	CENTCOM
Venezuela	Florida	SOUTHCOM

Source: U.S. National Guard Bureau, [http://www.ngb.dtic.mil/staff/ia/spp\\_info\\_paper.shtml](http://www.ngb.dtic.mil/staff/ia/spp_info_paper.shtml) (accessed July 12, 2002).

flowering of the relationship between the partners to achieve maximum, positive impact” on U.S. governmental objectives.<sup>8</sup> Civilian activity in the program, including institution building and related activities, takes hold as well during this time.

During the final phase, known as the maturation phase, military activity and funding decline, but civilian engagement with the partner nation continues to rise. “In this phase,” Colonel Brewer explains, “sources of funding from civilian agencies are primarily used to maintain the SPP partnership. NGB funding continues as funds allow. ... The partner state may become available

to initiate a new partnership [at the Defense Department’s request] and begin the cycle again.”<sup>9</sup> EUCOM officials are currently evaluating the potential of the three nations that joined NATO in 1999, as well as that of several other countries preparing to enter NATO in the near future, to graduate from the program so that their state partners can undertake new assignments.

**The U.S. critically needs to expand the list of potential allies and coalition partners.**

SPP guidelines therefore call for gradually shifting partnership responsibilities to civilian

authorities at the federal and state level once the military phases of each state partnership have been completed. Apart from the NGB, however, it is not clear whether any federal officials—from either the State or Defense Department—are giving the states much guidance or any funding to continue their partnerships once the maturation stage ends. This apparent lack of continuity and transition planning is a current deficiency in the SPP. This weakness was probably less important when the only goal of the SPP was to help gain membership for a given partner country in the NATO alliance, which provided a political framework for continued cooperation with the United States. Now that many SPP partnerships are increasingly linked to the areas of responsibility of a given U.S. military command, however, as opposed to NATO accession, no one knows whether (and, if so, to what extent) the State and Defense Departments will consider directly supporting state civilian participation in a given partnership during or even after the maturation stage.

One aspect of the SPP, however, has not changed from the program’s inception. Its supporters—Democrats and Republicans alike—have always carefully distinguished their efforts from nation building, as have the program’s backers in the military. When asked recently if the SPP is building nations, a program spokesperson said no. “We do not teach these countries how to have a government.”<sup>10</sup>

## Colorado's Partnership with Slovenia

Colorado's current partnership with the Republic of Slovenia illustrates the SPP in action. Maj. Gen. Mason C. Whitney of the U.S. Air Force, now the adjutant general of the Colorado National Guard and a leader in the partnership since its inception, recalls that the NGB originally chose to pair Colorado with Slovenia for several reasons, including (1) geographical similarities, especially between Colorado's Rocky Mountains and Slovenia's Alps, and (2) the historical presence of a small but influential Slovene population in southern Colorado.

Bordering Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Croatia and facing the northern Adriatic Sea, Slovenia, with a current population of nearly two million, won its independence from Yugoslavia in July 1991 following a 10-day war. After enacting a democratic constitution and establishing a parliamentary system of government, Slovenia set out to reform and modernize its armed forces and, in 1993, began its official quest for NATO membership. At that same time, the war in Bosnia had focused NATO's attention on Slovenia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia, leading, also in 1993, to the NGB's decision to match Slovenia with Colorado in the SPP. Then-Governor Roy Romer (D) formally recognized the partnership by executive order on March 31, 1994.

As a result of the partnership, the Colorado National Guard supported various traveling contact teams, military-to-military exchanges, and familiarization visits with Slovenia's political leaders and its defense ministry. These activities were aimed at supporting the country's expected NATO bid. Colorado's SPP partnership marked a key milestone in 1995 when the Slovenian government began the annual planning-and-review process for joining NATO under the alliance's Partnership for Peace program. As part of this process, Slovenia negotiated with NATO its level of participation in various peace and humanitarian activities and its policy against WMD proliferation. The Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) also developed plans for expanded civilian control, force modernization, systems interoperability, and other improvements required by NATO for integration into the alliance.

The Colorado National Guard assisted in these and other efforts by providing instruction and resources in mutually identified areas such as logistics, force organization, aviation and airfield management, air base development, communications, professional development, employer-employee relations, and personnel training programs.<sup>11</sup> By 1997, SAF personnel were successfully serving on the ground in NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. NATO forces in Bosnia also used Slovenia's main oceanport, Koper, as a logistics center for troop deployment and as a maintenance depot.

The following year, Slovenia adopted and began implementing its national strategy for NATO integration, a necessary precondition for full alliance membership. Among other things, this strategy calls for increased defense spending and continued development of a highly trained and well-equipped standing military force, including specialized rapid-reaction units, a professional reserve force, and gradual reduction in military conscription through a selective draft. The SPP has hastened the quality improvements in military training that this strategy demands. More than 400 Slovenian military officers have trained in the United States since 1993, including two graduates of the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.<sup>12</sup>

On the political front, Slovenia's strategy for NATO accession challenged its military and civilian leaders to address specific NATO concerns about the country's ongoing process of democratization, such as harmonizing

**The SPP can serve as a model for other democracy-building initiatives.**

selected legislation with European Union requirements, protecting ethnic minorities, strengthening the enforcement of private property rights, promoting judicial transparency, and eliminating backlogs in the country's civil court cases.<sup>13</sup> To show his support for these and other Slovenian military and political reforms, as well as for the Colorado National Guard's continuing commitment to the SPP, Governor Bill Owens (R) visited Slovenia

in 2000. Bush then selected Slovenia's capital city, Ljubljana, for his first meeting with Russian president Vladimir Putin in June 2001. After the September 11 attacks, Slovenian leaders pledged their support in the war on terrorism, sharing intelligence about potential terrorist links in Bosnia-Herzegovina and offering the country's elite mountain training center as a training area for U.S. forces.

Colorado National Guard officials who have been actively involved in the state's partnership with Slovenia emphasize the important incentives provided by NATO's specific accession criteria in both the military and civilian spheres. According to these officials, the constant pressure on Slovenia to meet the required processes and milestones has been extremely helpful, both in setting partnership expectations and in determining the specific types and levels of assistance to be provided. The Colorado National Guard also stresses that, unlike some other SPP countries, Slovenia already had a fledgling democratic government in place when the country began its drive toward NATO membership. Given the perceived likelihood that Slovenia will soon be extended full NATO membership, possibly as early as the fall of 2002, the country may have already entered the maturation phase of the

SPP, raising the possibility that the NGB might ask Colorado to consider a new SPP partnership opportunity elsewhere.

## **Improving the War on Terror**

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The September 11 attacks against the United States and the ensuing war on terrorism are testing several of the relationships forged through the SPP. Many of the results so far have been encouraging. For example, SPP partnerships in two former Soviet republics, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, reportedly helped facilitate the deployment of 4,000 U.S. and allied troops to the area to support operations against Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> In another part of the former Soviet Union, U.S. Special Forces are training 2,000 Georgian fighters in mountain fighting, urban combat, and other counterterrorism activities, again building on previous SPP training and relationships.<sup>15</sup>

More generally, NATO's aggregate capabilities and its members' contributions are increasing as more nations become integrated into the alliance, thanks at least in part to their participation in the SPP. This outcome has also positively affected the war on terrorism. Current U.S. efforts to help stabilize and democratize the government in post-Taliban Afghanistan are a case in point. When Slovenian and other new or aspiring NATO peacekeepers are assigned to SFOR or the Kosovo Force in the Balkans, they effectively free other NATO members to participate in peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan. SPP partnerships have similarly aided the collection and sharing of intelligence on Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations and have helped provide forward bases and logistical support to the allied military campaign. In addition, National Guard sources report informally that SPP relationships have enhanced political support for the U.S.-led war effort.

Quantifying the precise contribution with which the SPP may have strengthened these relationships is difficult. Anecdotally, however, the program appears to have made a positive difference in several key parts of the world at a time when the United States should welcome the help. Since September 11, U.S. citizens have been living in a world where classical concepts of military deterrence have become less effective in confronting at least some of the country's enemies. Therefore, U.S. forces may need to intervene rapidly—and sometimes preemptively—in places that lie well beyond the traditional ambit of the United States' Cold War-era alliance architecture, as the Bush administration's forthcoming national security strategy reportedly urges. The experience of the past decade strongly suggests that the United States may not be able or willing to conduct all these missions alone. Instead, the U.S. government will probably need to assemble

U.S.-led multinational coalitions—sometimes with little or no warning—to confront such dangers effectively.

A key lesson of September 11 is that the current ability of the United States to enlist reliable and credible coalition partners in some parts of the world is not nearly as strong as the threats the United States could face. John O’Sullivan assesses what he calls the United States’ “sorry search for non-European allies” in the war on terrorism. Contrasting the current capabilities of potential U.S. coalition partners in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America to what he calls “the functioning and successful military alliance of NATO,” O’Sullivan concludes, “No other state or collection of states comes close to Europe as an ally that can seriously assist the [United States] in maintaining global order.”<sup>16</sup> O’Sullivan draws this conclusion in an essay arguing for the continued importance of the transatlantic relationship. Even in this context, the author carefully notes the contributions of several non-European democracies, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, to the war on terrorism. Japan also comes to mind.

Without question, the United States will continue to need Europe and NATO both because of Europe’s comparative military capabilities vis-à-vis other potential U.S. partners and because of shared democratic values and institutions. O’Sullivan’s “sorry search” leads to another compelling point, however, for the United States and its traditional allies: they critically need to expand the list of potential allies and coalition partners for the years and decades ahead—ideally to countries that the United States can encourage over time to join the ranks of free and democratic nations. Laying the groundwork for such long-term political and military relationships will demand the kind of diplomatic leadership that Bush and his administration have so skillfully demonstrated since the September 11 attacks. The process will also require democracy-building efforts, such as the SPP, that promote institutional reform in strategically important countries that, if ignored or left to the mercy of terrorists and their supporters, might eventually threaten Western interests.

### **Working with States to Pursue the National Interest**

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As the SPP begins its second decade and shifts further away from its roots in NATO enlargement, the time is perhaps appropriate to take stock of the program and its potential to serve as a model for other democracy-building initiatives. Probably the most intriguing lesson for the future is how the program leverages the power of individual states to serve the national interest. This unique federal-state partnership has resulted, among other things, in the emergence of a small but potentially influential state-level constituency,

including state governors and legislators as well as National Guard officials, who can directly attest to the benefits of U.S. democracy building abroad. This constituency increasingly extends beyond state government to include leaders in the business and nonprofit sectors who develop international contacts through the SPP and sometimes graduate into more extensive commercial and professional relationships.

By analogy, the emerging state-level constituency in favor of the SPP is not unlike the states' increasingly strong support, in comparison with that of Congress, for expanded trade and investment ties with other nations. Scholars such as Earl Fry have long contended that state-level international contacts are increasingly important because they help moderate excessive partisanship and parochialism, particularly in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy by Congress. These analysts point out that the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which Congress initially opposed, occurred only after a successful lobbying campaign by the nation's governors and state legislators.<sup>17</sup> Viewed in this context, the SPP helps generate grassroots political support at the state level for U.S. democracy building abroad. Companies and entrepreneurs in Colorado and many other states are closely watching the progress of NATO enlargement as a proxy for predicting future market stability and privatization in Central and Eastern Europe. These businesses and like-minded stakeholders and investors are a visible and active lobbying presence in Washington.

From an institutional standpoint, state governors can effectively advocate democratic reform within emerging nations, and they can speak authoritatively to nations' leaders about how the nuts and bolts of freedom and democracy produce positive change. As the states' chief executives, governors—like national leaders—are typically judged on the results of their policies and programs. They are in direct touch with a broad constituency. They must lead large bureaucracies and interact on a daily basis with elected legislators. Because governors can identify with some of the problems and challenges that elected leaders face in emerging democracies, they can bring a credible and practical approach to conversations about institutional reform and procedural improvement.

Perhaps most promising, the manner in which state governments have worked to expand NATO and other potentially valuable relationships through the SPP—under the overall direction of U.S. military and foreign policy leaders—could broaden the political support for strategic de-

**The SPP leverages the power of individual states to serve the national interest.**

mocracy-building policies. Closer integration of state governments into such policies—at the same time harnessing the competitive power of federalism to develop more innovative partnerships and to share best practices—might even help mitigate excessive political wrangling over such policies.

Looking forward, the challenge is to extend and perhaps replicate the SPP model in ways that serve both federal and state interests. With respect to the latter consideration, states participate in the SPP because it benefits them to do so, not because they have (or should have) their own foreign policy goals separate and apart from those of the national government. On the contrary, states gain directly from the training that the SPP provides for their own National Guard units as well as indirectly through the access and contacts the program offers. Conversely, SPP participation costs state governments virtually nothing. Washington pays almost the entire bill in the form of direct congressional appropriations to the NGB, including virtually all the costs of each state National Guard unit's participation in the SPP. States do have the flexibility to supplement the civilian side of the program if they choose—with state appropriations, private monies, or a combination of both—but the decision is theirs, not Washington's. This funding arrangement certainly helps explain why the SPP enjoys so much bipartisan support and embraces most states.

Any expansion of the SPP would need to build on its existing success. One approach is for the federal government to direct and fund expanded state involvement in the SPP by civilian leaders in areas of specific interest and importance, particularly when a given partner country is deemed to have reached “maturation.” Professional exchanges and traveling contact visits with state officials from all branches of government could help reinforce the democratic transitions under way in each nation. The SPP should also encourage experts from the private and nonprofit sectors to participate, again under the direction of Washington to ensure that these and other efforts directly meet U.S. foreign policy objectives.

## **Nurturing Allies Together**

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By tempering the United States' historical sense of invulnerability, the September 11 attacks also destroyed the illusion that, as the last remaining superpower, the United States can go it alone in world affairs. In the years ahead, the U.S. government will need more, not fewer, friends and supporters to meet the challenges posed by international terrorism, WMD, and other threats. Strategic democracy-building policies such as the SPP can help bring more allies and coalition partners into the fold while perhaps

moving the United States toward another increasingly vital source of protection: a more free and prosperous world.

As with past challenges, friends are looking to the United States for leadership to realize the potential of sustained U.S. democracy-building policies in the post–September 11 world. Heinrich Kreft, the respected German scholar and diplomat, typified the cautious optimism that many U.S. allies are quietly expressing: “There is reason to believe that this is a time not just of new and formidable dangers, but also the beginning of a new and epoch-making chapter in history.”<sup>18</sup> According to Kreft, the opportunity afforded by the war on terrorism is “comparable perhaps with the years 1945 to 1947, when the [United States] led the way in helping previously totalitarian countries—including Germany and Japan, its principal opponents in World War II—find a secure place within the community of free and democratic nations.”<sup>19</sup>

**State-level international contacts can help moderate excessive partisanship.**

Our friends correctly remind us that, in those momentous years immediately following World War II, Democrats and Republicans disagreed forcefully on many things but not on the need for the United States to encourage the institutional development of strategically important nations toward the path of democratic self-governance. In shaping the future of postwar Japan, for example, leaders as politically diverse as the supreme allied military commander, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, and his leading critics in the State Department, such as George F. Kennan of the Policy Planning Staff, agreed on the critical need to support the process of Japanese democratization. This policy, along with other reforms, led to the so-called MacArthur (or Peace) Constitution, establishing Japan’s new government based on the principles of universal suffrage, separation of governmental powers, transparency, and the rule of law. To allow democracy to take root, the United States also pledged to protect the Japanese people from both the Soviet military threat and potential domestic unrest. The allies similarly worked together to protect postwar Germany and to support the process leading to the enactment of West Germany’s constitution, the Basic Law.

Some may find it tempting to reject the possibility that Republican and Democratic leaders will ever again come together in the way they did at the end of World War II, to forge a national consensus for actively supporting the development of democratic institutions and values abroad. Before giving way to that temptation, however, one should reflect on the bipartisan success that the SPP has enjoyed during the past decade. Through SPP, leaders

from both parties are working together at the state level to encourage strategic democratization abroad, while strengthening support on both sides of the aisle for democracy-building policies in Washington.

## Notes

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1. Earl H. Fry, *The Expanding Role of State and Local Governments in U.S. Foreign Affairs* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1998), p. 5.
2. See Joseph W. Ralston, *State Partnership Stockholders Report* (September 2000), p. 5.
3. See, for example, North Atlantic Council, "National Strategy for Integration of the Republic of Slovenia into NATO," March 11, 1998.
4. Col. Max Brewer, "Life Cycle of the National Guard State Partnership Program in EUROM" (memo, March 7, 2002, EUROM National Guard Program, "The Next Generation" conference, March 20–21, 2002) (hereinafter Brewer memo).
5. Ralston, *State Partnership Stockholders Report*, p. 1.
6. Ibid.
7. Gen. Carton W. Fulford Jr. (briefing, "The Next Generation" conference, March 20, 2002).
8. Brewer memo.
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